

**OH, THE HYPOCRISY! OR, A DRAMATURGICAL
ANALYSIS OF MOLIERE'S TARTUFFE**

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OH, THE HYPOCRISY!

OR, A DRAMATURGICAL ANALYSIS OF MOLIÈRE'S *TARTUFFE*

AN ALTERNATIVE TO A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

BY

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COLUMBUS, GA

2016

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ABSTRACT

In approaching *Tartuffe* from a dramaturgical standpoint, one must consider the relevancy of the production and how the production team is able to translate the message of an antiquated play to a modern audience. In our case, the solution was to set the play in 1926 Paris instead of the original 1669 Paris. From there, I conducted research on the two periods, discovered the pivotal factors that connected them, and further connected those issues to today's world. After consulting scholarly articles concerning French history and literature, I compiled a Dramaturgy Casebook that contains information and analyses crucial to understanding the world of the play.

INDEX WORDS: Molière, *Tartuffe*, France, Dramaturgy

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SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Tartuffe begins in the household of Orgon, a wealthy landowner in Paris. His mother, Madame Pernelle, has just finished railing at everyone for their disdain for an absentee clergyman by the name of Tartuffe, who is a guest in the house of Orgon. Tartuffe has duped Orgon and Madame Pernelle into thinking that no one on earth is more religiously virtuous and devout than he. Meanwhile, others of the household are not so easily convinced. Orgon's brother-in-law, Cléante, questions Orgon's plan to renounce his promise to marry his daughter, Mariane, to the young Valère; now Orgon wishes for Mariane to marry Tartuffe. The "saucy" housemaid, Dorine, reconciles the dispute between the two young lovers and at the same time pacifies Mariane's brother, Damis, because of his outrage at the plan. Dorine reveals that she arranged a meeting between Orgon's wife, Elmire, and Tartuffe to expose his fraudulence once and for all.

Much to the chagrin of Elmire, Damis listens to the awkward seduction behind a door, bursts in, and raises such an accusatory din that Orgon disinherits Damis and gives over the inheritance to Tartuffe. Cléante later attempts to reason with Tartuffe and convince him to redeem Damis, but Tartuffe refuses. Mariane, meanwhile, can no longer bear her newest marriage arrangement, and begs her father to reconsider, but he also refuses. Elmire takes charge and decides to formulate a plot herself by having Orgon hide under the table while she summons Tartuffe in for yet another false seduction on her part. Tartuffe is wary of this "seduction," given her earlier restraint, and wants her to prove it "more concretely." Before it goes any further, Orgon reveals himself in a rage and confronts Tartuffe, only to be reminded that Tartuffe now holds the property rights and will have his retribution.

In addition to the property rights, Tartuffe also possesses documents that, if exposed to the king, could mean total ruin for Orgon. Damis is almost ready to fight Tartuffe, when Madame Pernelle interrupts, expressing her utter disbelief at what Tartuffe has been accused of. Amidst the family's attempts to convince her otherwise, a Monsieur Loyale enters with an order of eviction for Orgon, shortly followed by Valère, who tells Orgon that he must flee the country because of Tartuffe's exposure of "an exile's" papers to the king (Molière 100).

Just as Orgon is about to exit, Tartuffe reenters with an officer of the king, which warrants many venomous sentiments from the members of the household. Tartuffe commands the officer to arrest Orgon, but the officer arrests Tartuffe instead, disclosing that the king saw through Tartuffe's ruse, and that he is a known criminal. The king has pardoned Orgon because of his loyalty to the crown in the last war. Orgon verbally torments Tartuffe, only to be stopped again by Cléante, who advises him to simply forget Tartuffe's discretions and turn his attention to showing his gratitude to the king. Orgon obliges, insisting that the family ready themselves to see the king, after which, Mariane and Valère may finally be married.

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

When discerning dramatic elements of *Tartuffe*, one must not forget the Renaissance that preceded the writing of it by only 250 years. Medieval Europe had seen a massive influx of religious plays, particularly mystery and miracle. These forms steadily declined after the Renaissance really took hold, and were eventually banned in Paris in favor of more secular subjects. Surprisingly enough, both Catholics and Protestants shared disdain for the plays. Catholics believed that they degraded the holy subject matter while the Protestants simply condemned most theatre anyway (Brown 220).

With the ushering in of the European Renaissance, there was, naturally, a harkening back to classical technique, and theatre was no exception. Tragedy and comedy replaced mystery and manner, and Italian drama heavily influenced French writers; especially the works of Seneca. Through these classical influences, Louis's collection of artists in his court, and strategically centralizing the power of the state, France simultaneously became a world power on the political front as well as the literary front. Just as Louis saw himself as a new Caesar, Paris—so he visualized—should be seen as a new Rome.

During this time, the superior form of tragedy is written in the five-act form with a rhyming “Alexandrine” verse. By the end of the 1500s, this had long been the established form of tragedy, and its influence on French high art is clear, but these plays were rarely a hot topic in professional theatre. Such heady tragedies were often reserved for the people of the court, who also had to be relieved once in a while by more light-hearted productions such as humanist tragedies and the medieval religious plays that had been banned in Paris. Pierre Corneille established the five-act form for tragedy in the 1630s, giving the story the unity and linearity desired by classical authors. This form influenced the 19th-century idea of Freytag's pyramid,

which breaks down a story into a clear exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and a dénouement. According to Aristotle, a play is about the action, not a particular character. The exposition was meant to introduce a character who would make a decision, so spurring the action. According to Aristotle, one is not to imitate a character, but imitate life, which means analyzing decisions and what the character does to achieve what he or she wants (Brown 221).

Despite such structural expectations, Molière's original publication of *Tartuffe* had a 3-act structure, the very simplest form of Aristotle's decree of plot structure. All a story requires is a beginning, middle, and end—or, rather, a protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe. It wasn't until the writings of the Roman critic Horace surfaced that the five-act structure was fully advocated and pushed upon the literary world. Produced a few years before *Tartuffe* was *School for Wives*, which was a five-act play, but written in prose. It received the same criticism from the upper classes as *Tartuffe*, and for similar reasons. Certainly there was some criticism for its own supposed denigration of the upper class, but it was also criticized largely for its "lack of taste"—simply put, it did not comply with grammatical and literary rules set in stone by the masters of the past. Molière, in fact, wrote a response to the critics of *School for Wives* in which he had to explain himself and his new and somewhat original writing style.

Molière later implemented the five-act structure as well as the Alexandrine rhyming couplet. The royal court saw clergymen upset with the attacks on religion, but it is important to remember that clergy at this time were also very well-educated in the sciences, literature, history, and other subjects that we consider secular today. They would have recognized, as an audience with a trained ear, that this inferior comedic form did not comply with the superior tragic form that had persisted for several generations now. It would have been viewed as a prince marrying a commoner (Brown 233).

So the question then becomes, “Why this choice? What was Molière’s objective in mixing dramatic forms when he could have simply complied with tastes of the court?” Here is a strong possibility: It is important to remember its origin as a three-act play and remember its criticism for its vulgarity and perversion of religious doctrine—which wasn’t the intent, of course. Molière cherished *Tartuffe* and had a determination to have this play produced more than any of his past works. The king greatly admired Molière as a person and literary figure—it was those who served the king that did not take kindly to its message. Molière’s connection to the king had saved him from being excommunicated from the courts completely, but had not saved the play’s publication. There needed to be a way to appease the courts and at the same time use his liberties to convey his message. the best option would have been to take the comedic and farcical elements of drama—character and basic story line—and elevate it with a more “scholarly” structure. The intent was not, on the other hand, to debase the Alexandrine form with elements of Commedia. Before discussing the combination, it would be best to discuss the use of commedia and its impact on Molière.

Just before Molière’s career took off, tragedians dealt mostly with historical and mythological subject matter that implemented unity of time and tone and focused on a singular event as opposed to a more episodic form of the mystery plays. Comedy did draw from Italian models early on—especially from the plays of Plautus and Terence, both Roman—while also retaining a few characteristics of the medieval farce. Many performances of these early comedies were, like the tragedies, reserved for the university setting or for private patrons. However, the Italian influence and contribution in northern theatre starting in the 1570s is unquestionable (Brown 221).

The first Italian company to make a groundbreaking impact on French drama was that of Alberto Ganassa, who was a famous Arlecchino (harlequin or jester) on the Commedia stage (Brown 223). He was invited to perform at the wedding of Charles IX, but was not invited back due to his high asking price. However, he came back to perform at yet another wedding—that of Henri IV. Other popular companies came to perform in the courts, and it was from then on that theatre began to develop a strong sense of visual effect and impact, especially when it came to distinguishing the character types typical of Commedia. In this form of drama, masks, gesture, and costumes were used to distinguish character types, which had a distinct purpose in the outcome of the performance. Commedia was not a scripted performance, but instead was based on sketches or scenarios, which were then to be improvised through use of props and physicality.

The most easily-recognizable character types within Commedia are as follows: 1) the Arlecchino—the wise servant. 2) Il Dottore—the head of the house. 3) Il Capitano—the manly soldier hiding his true cowardice. 4) Innamorati—the hopeless lovers who belong to the upper class. 5) Pantalone—the wealthy elder. 6) Columbina—the saucy maid or servant (Brown 225). Documenting the earliest influence of this form and its types in Paris is the *Recueil Fossard*, which were woodblock engravings containing imagery of the Commedia types and a French actor named Agnan Sarat—one of the first “famous” actors. They evoke a farcical atmosphere, but also hint at other dramatic forms, which speak to the struggle of French theatres at the time to establish their repertory. There came to be a mix of tragedy and farce, but it quickly became clear that companies fared better if they offered a farce-heavy repertory (Brown 225).

Theatre in France eventually developed into the Baroque style via Alexandre Hardy, who wrote for the Hotel de Bourgogne. The timing could not have been any more perfect for this

development, for the Baroque era was characterized by spectacle. Vigor, exuberance, and imagination filled the stage as theatrical complexity took hold with “disguise and ambush” (Brown 226), onstage violence, vernacular and domestic themes, play-within-the-play intricacies, literary aggrandizement, and exaggerated poetics—only to be abandoned when Cardinal Richelieu stepped in to enforce his refining policies of the arts with the creation of the Academie Française in 1635. This marked a standard for French art that would be enforced for almost 300 years, and one that Molière himself would have to follow. Not to say that Richelieu’s policies killed the Baroque movement by any means. He well understood the effect that the arts had on the permanence of the monarchy, and sought to establish firm conventions of French life and leave his mark on theatre by creating a company of authors to work under him.

Reinforced under Richelieu was a less-poetic and less self-conscious verse based on rationality and the aforementioned unity of time, place, action, and tone. These canons may have influenced the development of the single-faceted perspective set, which gave a perfectly-modeled background based on the linear perspective technique developed during the Renaissance. Rationality and black-and-white conventions dominated the stage, with the exception of Pierre Corneille’s *Le Cid* of 1637—a tragicomedy, but with an attempt to fit into classical tragedian tradition (Brown 227). He, along with many other authors took to tragedy as their sole mode of expression after this, likely due to the fact that it was difficult to have much artistic freedom otherwise, especially if tragedy was the superior skill of the author. Comedy, on the other hand, had a wider range of formats to choose from, including one-act prelude or after-show pieces and Commedia-like sketches that were performed in the public eye, especially at the Hotel de Bourgogne. Molière had the good fortune to see actors such as Gros-Guillaume perform in these farces that gave them their reputation.

Along with his influences, it is also important to note Molière's personal background. Coming from a middle class family, he would have had better opportunities than most to attend the theatre. His grandfather, who took a particular liking to this type of theatre, took him to see the Bourgogne productions. Lastly, Molière received a decent education before pursuing a career in theatre, so he would have had knowledge of the classics—knowing this, it becomes easy to understand the earliest intellectual stimulation of Molière and his work, and ultimately understand how Molière's unique meshing of form came to be (Brown 231).

French comedy of the mid-17th century became highly characterized by dissention between mimetic comedy and ludic comedy—an imitation of real life and a contortion or hyperbole of real life, respectively (Brown 231). There is continued evidence of the popularity of the Italian farces due to constant Italian visits to France, particularly by the company which included Tiberio Fiorilli, a famous Scaramouche, which combined the zanni servant character and the Capitano. Both French and Italian farce worked heavily with domestic relationships—especially that of marriage—but the Italians had more complicated plot lines often involving younger lovers who are trying to escape an arranged marriage to other people, set up by the Pantalone. This is a connection ever so clear in *Tartuffe* regarding Marianne's unwanted marriage to Tartuffe, which forces her to confide in Dorine to help her convince Orgon to let her marry her one true love, Valère.

Molière drew from both forms of farce, but utilized the five-act structure used for mimetic comedy. Its purpose was to imitate life, but also depict a "portrait of the manners and conversation of persons of good breeding" (Brown 232) according to Corneille. In other words, it had to make a good name for Parisian social elites. This proved problematic, of course, because of the nature of the mimetic form. Earlier literary experts had distinguished true comedy and

farce by saying that “the imitation of life, not the arousing of laughter, was to be the comic dramatist’s goal” (Brown 232). The purists of the well-educated class of audiences further believed that laughter only fueled a person’s more uncouth side. Molière had the gall to both imitate life and arouse laughter. This begs the question, “Well, isn’t life itself funny sometimes?” If Molière could get the gentry to laugh at a “real-life” portrait of themselves, would they then consider themselves vulgar? Perhaps not directly. Instead, it would probably register as an attack on their society, too prideful to laugh at themselves. Either way, this is exactly the ink-under-the-skin genius in Molière’s fusion of farce and true comedy, creating something entirely original and satirical—something to be further developed by Diderot, Beaumarchais, and Voltaire.

Once Molière had established his company in the Palais-Royal with a varied repertory, he sought to make himself known as a tragic actor as well as a comedic one, but it was soon clear that his true talent was for comedy. By this point, the preference for tragedy over comedy in the court was declining anyway. Molière himself had interacted with Tiberio Fiorilli, eventually shared his theatre space with him, and developed and modeled his comedic skill—in both acting and writing—from that. Molière began as the Italian Mascarille, who used his wits and resourcefulness for trickery, but quickly switched to the more French-based Sganarelle, whose predisposition to self-induced delusion causes him to force it upon others. The imagination of the former makes him an artful deceiver while the imagination of the other makes him fall into a self-made trap. The latter Sganarelle was the catalyst for a string of similar characters that were especially prominent in Molière’s later works, namely *Tartuffe*’s Orgon; the role ended up proving a good fit for Molière’s acting talents (Brown 235).

This mixing of types was, as expected, not received well by many critics, who claimed that the mesh of style was “unsatisfactory.” Molière quickly went to its defense saying that

“there is no reason why a character should not be a sympathetic representative of ordinary men and women in some respects, and a figure of fun in others” (Brown 236). We laugh at such characters because of their rigidity and mechanical response to oppositional behavior, but they are never so far removed from reality that they are unreachable in our imagination. In fact, all of *Tartuffe*’s characters have some attribute of Commedia, but have been elevated to the high comedy plane by way of relationships, intricate dialogue, and empathy for those dearest to them.

Further, they are elevated by concepts and ideas present within their text. While Commedia relied on improvisation which would have been spontaneous and shallow, Molière’s verses gave the characters an opportunity for clear expression of different facets of human thought, emotion, personality, and interaction. More importantly, the verse gives the author a chance to make clear his intention of what the audience should take from the message that is being conveyed. The dialogue is ever paramount in the understanding of development of the action and message, which is why the characters are so prone to “talking too much.”

The primary focus of any *Tartuffe* analysis is its criticism of religious hypocrisy. Molière is criticizing those who use religion for manipulative means instead of for the betterment of mankind. Throughout the play, Tartuffe responds with an exaggerated sense of morality—remorse for killing the flea, tearing apart the kerchief placed in the Life of Jesus, “forgiving” Damis for his outrage—to gain favor with Orgon, who disinherits his own son and hands over ownership of the estate to Tartuffe (Molière). At the same time, he lustfully attempts to seduce Orgon’s wife—the very opposite of a good example of a chaste member of the church. Unbeknownst to the general public, Molière was likely using Tartuffe to criticize a member of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, a non-ordained church group with the mission of enforcing Catholic doctrine without the actual certification of the clergy. One of these members did just as

Tartuffe—claimed a life of God and salvation of the family while attempting to seduce the wife of the man of the house. But this is mostly seen as an understanding of court life under the rule of Louis XIV. Men with holy vows recognized the power and influence of the king, and only encouraged what was good for their personal image or stature, not for the good of the church, much less for the good of the starving majority that more than likely had more true piety than anyone.

Moral hypocrisy and societal hypocrisy come into play as well, mostly with Orgon and Madame Pernelle. Both have fallen under the spell of Tartuffe and force everyone to comply with his decree. Madame Pernelle preaches morality, heavenly following, and virtue when she herself has little patience for anyone but herself and her own worldview. Patience, respect, and acceptance are things that should be a part of daily practice whether one is religious or not. In the case of Orgon, he is quick to anger and has little self-control. Even Dorine says of him, “What, lost your temper? A pious man like you?” (Molière 35).

In another similar vein are ideas of loyalty, marriage, and justice. When it comes to loyalty, Orgon makes promises that he does not keep—quite literally not practicing what he’s preaching. Further, he shows disloyalty to his king by hiding a strongbox containing a convict’s papers, disloyalty to his wife by disregarding her needs in favor of Tartuffe’s, a social disloyalty to his son by disinheriting him in vain, and the same such disloyalty to his daughter by not letting her marry Valère. Loyalty is what saves the family, however. Out of loyalty to their father, the Pernelles forgive Orgon, as does the King. Further, the king respects Orgon’s loyalty to the throne during “the late civil war” (Molière 100), and loyalty is ultimately posed as a virtue. Although Moliere himself might seem disloyal to his audience by satirizing upper class society,

he is asking the audience to carefully place their own loyalty. Of course, in 17th-century France, loyalty to one's sovereign may have been important in keeping yourself and your family alive.

Marriage in *Tartuffe* isn't quite so prevalent an idea as it is in Molière's earlier play, *School for Wives*, but it is still important, considering that we have two couples as principle roles. Molière especially explores adultery within marriage and the absolute catastrophe of marrying someone against their will—rather, someone being pursued against their will, which was most often the case in the 17th century, especially for women. Marianne's initial submission to her father speaks to the customs of marriage that were so strongly upheld during this time period. However, she and Dorine are both ultimately strong-willed, which was more than likely catering to the increased importance of women in the French court.

Most significant is the idea of marriage not just as a consummation of love at this time, but a way to ensure upward mobility, to make a name for oneself, to make peace, or some other objective that had nothing to do with the feelings of the two people involved. Molière seems to think this form a ridiculous one through Dorine, who upholds the notion that arranged marriages are the very cause of adultery because of a lack of connection between husband and wife. This gives important insight about Molière's own views of love—that although he understood full well the impact of the family being connected to either a just and honest man or a charlatan, he perhaps was a romantic himself.

Lastly, justice also intertwines with the theme of hypocrisy in *Tartuffe*. A poor display of justice prevails in the Pernelle home under none other than Orgon, of course—what with all his abandonment of the needs of his ill wife for the teachings of Tartuffe. By the time Elmire opens his eyes to his fallacies, his multiple injustices cannot be undone except by the higher power of the king. Ultimately, the king takes the high ground for the sense of justice, both societally and

morally—he restores Orgon's honor while also punishing Tartuffe for his severe misdeeds. Of course, Louis would have made these sorts of decisions as king in the first place, but Molière was hinting that the king should also discreetly weigh his judgement of others, was placing faith in the king to make the right decisions about who he let convince him what was right and wrong.

Whatever the case, Molière sought to right what he saw wrong in high society, or at least create an awareness of it. Through *Tartuffe* and other mature works, he broke theatrical and literary molds because he elevated comedy to an academic level by rounding out Commedia characters with sympathetic qualities, implementing complex plots, and using an Alexandrine form that had only been used for the most critically-acclaimed literature in the past. Whenever faced with opposition, Molière took the logical route and responded with clear, explanatory essays conveying the meaning of his fused form and controversial themes instead of taking to the very absurd extremes that Cléante spoke out against. Through his comedies, there developed an entirely new literary genre that was to change the face of French society and eventually spur one of the most famous revolutions in the history of the Western world.

PRODUCTION HISTORY/ CRITICAL RECEPTION

Tartuffe has come a long way from its opening performance. Though quite well-received by the king himself, it was not revered quite so highly by the religious advisors of the time.

Tartuffe began as a three-act play that first premiered for Louis XIV's court in 1664. It may have been minorly rejected by scholars of the time because of its lack of adherence to the classical five-act structure, but such critique pales in comparison to the condemnation spurned upon the play by the court's clergy (Sumption 3).

Critics of the day held the common misconception that Molière was attacking religion and was not being fair in his accusations. However, Molière was in fact attacking religious hypocrisy and those who use religion as improper justification for certain behaviors, or those who simply don't practice what they preach. It is widely believed that Molière was attacking in particular the Jansenists, who were Calvinists that were living under the strictest of moral codes (Bates 183). Under pressure from the court clergy, the king decided to ban the play in the city of Paris, which prompted *Tartuffe* to set his sights on having the prohibition revoked.

Another criticism of the play was *Tartuffe*'s depiction as an actual clergyman. It is still easy to this day to mistake him for one, but in fact, he is a layman—an unordained member of the church. Molière also made this change in order to appease the court, and the structure was stretched to five acts. In tandem with the cosmopolitan members of society wanting to indulge in the sensation of Molière's risqué work was a competition among the salons to have *Tartuffe* read for a private audience, which further led to a desire to see it performed. The first private reading was for the pope and his bishops and cardinals who thought it, like many, to be satirizing the Jansenists. Molière denied it, but that very notion fared well with the Catholic leaders, who detested the Jansenists. On the other hand, the Jansenists saw no such connection and Molière

was able to play well with both sides and have the final version of his play performed on February 5th, 1669. This final version became wildly popular and was the version to be published and still used to this day (Bates 183).

Admittedly, it is difficult to collect information about *Tartuffe* productions since its original premiere date, at least until the 20th and 21st centuries. Most intriguing is the production directed by Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1939. Twenty years before World War II began in Europe, Russia had experienced the Bolshevik revolution, which instilled many new cultural incentives in Russia, including a mandate for only observing atheism, as well as a revolution of values which came to be known as socialist realism, which placed a huge emphasis on rationality. This version of *Tartuffe* more than likely fueled such notions and also would have spoken to Russian sentiments toward the blatant hypocrisy and extremism of the Nazi party as well as a desire of the Russian people to adhere to rationality and modest practice. Unfortunately, Stanislavski died during the show process and the director's position was fulfilled by Mikhail Kedrov (Hollywood Drama).

Even more intriguing was the fact that there is not another documented production of *Tartuffe* for more than 20 years after Stanislavski's (Hollywood Drama). Of course, the 1940s and 1950s were a time of war and international conflict. Not having quite the time or resources for theatre is beside the point. The world had recently been sacked by a global depression that followed on the heels of one of the most horrendous wars in history: The Great War. Although the United States was pulled out of the Depression by industrial boom during World War II, the rest of the western world was once again plunged into debt and destruction. Furthermore, new detrimental bomb technology and new and frightening political and economic ideologies were a constant threat from abroad. Although the literature of the United States eventually began

looking inward with plays such as *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*, foreign policy occupied the top of Washington's priority list. As a result, the theatre of the time was giving the populace the musical—an upbeat golden age of song and dance to uplift a world bereft of hope.

Tartuffe suddenly saw a resurgence of performances in the mid/late-1960s, beginning in the ANTA Washington Square Theatre in New York in 1965, which moved to the National Theatre Company in London in 1967, and finished out the decade with a performance at the Stratford Festival in Ontario, Canada in 1968. It is well-known that the 1960s were a turbulent time, especially in the United States, what with the incredibly hypocritical nature of the racial legislature—"All men are created equal" was not a phrase that was taken seriously, unfortunately.

Moving forward about 10 years, another production surfaced in the Circle in the Square Theatre in Manhattan, New York in 1977. The Vietnam War had just ended two years prior, and the Watergate Scandal of the Nixon administration occurred only a year before the war ended. Chaos had also risen in the Middle East, and the U.S. was experiencing a devastating recession that included a massive oil shortage. Needless to say, the American people's confidence in their government was subpar, and they were tired of being lied to, which makes *Tartuffe* relevant in this decade (Berkin).

As a result, the 1980s experienced a move toward conservatism politically, economically, and socially (Berkin). Reaganomics promised reconstruction of the economy, and created a largely materialistic and consumeristic society with the rise of big business. Much-overlooked is the fact that the federal government was plunged into the deepest debt it had experienced in history. This more than likely spurred the 1982 performance of Simon Gray's adaptation at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Two other productions took place: one in 1983 at the Royal

Shakespeare Company in London and another in 1987 at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh. Oddly enough, the U.K. was experiencing similar policies under Margaret Thatcher that the U.S. was experiencing under Reagan—privatization of industries and de-regulation of stock markets. In Northern Ireland, on the other hand, was a continuation of civil unrest, including hunger strikes instilled by prisoners of the Irish Republic Army in order to reinstate political rank (Keylor).

The Republic of Ireland considered themselves nationalists and wanted desperately for Northern Ireland—who considered themselves a part of the U.K.—to leave their alliance with Britain and unite Ireland. Oddly enough, Catholics made up the minority and were discriminated against by the Protestants who had control of the government and the police force. It must be said, though, that this was a political and not a religious conflict. Certainly the Irish found it hypocritical of the people who were geographically a part of Ireland to be associated with the British, who had been a source of oppression for the Irish for hundreds of years—perhaps this is the type of hypocrisy that the Edinburgh production wished to speak to (Keylor).

In 1990, productions of *Tartuffe* begin to take on conceptual ideas and modernizations. In 1990, Tara Arts Theatre Company performed their version of *Tartuffe* at the National Theatre in London. Performed in the style of Indian theatre, the play was instead set in the court of Aurangzeb, a Mughal emperor of India who ruled at the same time as Louis XIV did in France. It began with an Indian salutation dance in the Urdu language. The early 90s saw further attention to *Tartuffe* from the Indian communities when Ranjit Bolt—of Anglo-Indian descent—wrote his own translation in 1991, which was performed by the Playhouse Theatre in London that same year and also at the National Theatre in 1992 (TARA Staff).

At this point in India's history, the Ayodhya Dispute was still taking place in India after centuries of fighting about whether the Muslim mosque Babri Masjid had been built only after Muslims supposedly destroyed the temple site of the birthplace of Rama, who was believed to be the 7th incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu. The mosque was demolished by rebellious Hindu nationalist groups, leading to nationwide riots and over 2,000 deaths. When the case was resurfaced in 2010, the court decided that a temple did exist before the mosque at the same location, but the decision of whether or not it was destroyed to make way for the mosque was divided. The Archaeological Survey of India conducted excavations that were used extensively for court evidence that it was indeed a huge Hindu structure. In this case, stirring violence and death in the name of religion is yet another form of ultimate hypocrisy (BBC Staff).

Other modern productions that took a spin on *Tartuffe* were Circle in the Square Theatre's second production of the play in 1996 called *Tartuffe: Born Again*, which was set in a religious television station in Baton Rouge, was in modern verse, and was written for each character's plot to either help or hinder *Tartuffe* in his schemes. *The New York Times* ripped this production apart because it "provides no new insights on either Moliere's original text or on the role of religious hypocrisy in America today," broad comedy, overused jokes, and details about the "look and feel" of the world of the play that don't make sense. The only redeeming quality was Elmire, who "connected her Southernness and behavior" with "the sharply feminine air of a pragmatic former beauty queen, all too accustomed to fending off unwanted advances" (Brantley). Despite criticism, the production took on the tactics of televangelists, which, like *Tartuffe*, use performance, charisma, and emotional appeal to capture the attention of millions of viewers, earning sometimes a million-dollar salary—hypocritical for obvious reasons. No ordained man of god should be making that much money.

The Theatre de la Jeune Lune produced *Tartuffe* in Minneapolis in 2006 and took on a much more sinister atmosphere to the comedy. Charles McNulty of *LA Times* says of Orgon that he had “the unstoppable destructiveness of a tank. It's not clear what's troubling him, but he has the distracted air of someone plagued by heavy thoughts. He makes life impossible for others, it seems, to avoid being buried alive by his own melancholy” (McNulty). Although the comedy was not the focal point, it offered a fresh new way of looking at *Tartuffe*, and audiences and critics alike were enthralled. One critic argued that the commedia-and-realist-mix of characters makes for tricky staging, and this production navigated it well with “minor characters . . . treated more eccentrically,” while characters like Elmire are “given [their] realistic due.” This particular reviewer was also thrilled to see an adaptation of *Tartuffe* that “understands just how close a smile is to a frown” (McNulty).

The National Arts Center of Canada's production in 2013 set *Tartuffe* in Newfoundland in 1939. This particular production was praised for “solving the puzzle,” as one critic put it, of being a national theatre with a regional audience that had the added pressure of putting on unconventional shows for a commercial-sized performance space (Nestruck). By placing it in pre-war Newfoundland when the country “had abandoned responsible government [this makes it] a fine fit for a plot that hinges on tensions between religious and royal power” (Nestruck). Also historically relevant to Newfoundland's production was King George VI's visit to the province in 1939, which paralleled well to the officer's visit that concludes the play.

In order for it to relate even more to Newfoundlanders, the meter was often broken by colloquialisms and expressions of the area. Because the same cast is a part of the company for an entire season, different Canadian dialects can be heard such as French-Canadian or Torontonians. This might seem like a petty complaint to an American audience who probably won't know the

difference, but each province has its own identity, so Newfoundland authenticity matters.

However, it wasn't much of an issue, it only meant that some of the comedy "missed the mark" (Nestruck).

The Bell Shakespeare Company's version at the Sydney Opera House in Australia in 2014 incorporates a modern Australian twist of the Justin Fleming translation. Much like the Newfoundland production, this cast took a particular adaptation and added a colloquial flair to the script with typical Australian exclamations such as "bugger" and "crikey" while upholding a certain "sophistication" that is inherent in the translation. A couple of things criticized were the overkill set designs as well as the failure to modernize the script with reference to cars and Facebook but at the same time not bringing Marianne's character up-to-times—in other words, keeping her as a beautiful idiot, which "ask[s] [us] simply to ignore the sexism because it's an old play" (Keath). The set design critique is a little flawed because it seems like a misunderstanding of intent. Perhaps the design was homage to the excessive nature of Baroque architecture and décor in the lives of the upper class. Another critic praised it for connecting it so well to modern Sydney and their penchant toward "vanity and hypocrisy, and [their] desperate, often blinding desire to find more 'meaning' in [their] lives, no matter the cost" (Neutze). The production as a whole was praised for actor performances, abundance of laughs, and the writing of Fleming's edition.

Just as our production seeks to better translate *Tartuffe* for a modern (and sometimes more local) audience, these productions sought to do the same. Although some did not receive the best reviews because of the trite nature of the modernization and the tendency of trying too hard to make connections between time periods, the themes are universal. But those themes are sometimes not well-understood because of strict adherence to verse, to a certain translation, or to

setting it in the time period in which it was written. Of course, not everything is going to connect directly, but when there is an effort to bring theatre of the past to modern audiences, the theatre world becomes more and more accessible. Some would argue that this is a bad technique and that if one can't understand what is going on in the original context, then it is best left to those who do. However, that's a terribly elitist outlook and that only leaves the "non-theatre" crowd with more negative sentiments about theatre, and theatre can't exist without audiences—especially an audience that is multi-dimensional.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE PLAYWRIGHT

Beginning simply with Molière's personal background, he was born Jean-Baptiste Poquelin into a middle class family, received his education at a Jesuit school, and went on to pursue a career in theatre after studying civil law. He and his lover, Madeleine Bèjart, began the Illustre theatre, a short-lived establishment in Paris that was ultimately shut down due to lack of finances, lack of leading men, and dissention among the cast (Sumption 3).

Molière and Madeleine fled Paris by joining an acting troupe, and had taken on management of the troupe by 1653. Molière's key inspiration for his works, especially early on, was the format of the Italian Commedia Dell' Arte, which relied on stock characters and a series of improvisational scenarios with slapstick comedy. Of course, he did not strictly adhere to this format, but they did inspire much of his characters. As Molière's work matured, they became satires and comedies of manners, which criticize mostly those of the upper class, as we see in *Tartuffe* (Sumption 3).

Upon their return to Paris, Molière and Madeleine came to sublease the Theatre du Marais and obtain a patron, who was the brother of Louis XIV. The pivotal point in his career was the performance of a Corneille tragedy followed by a one-act farce. The farce proved to be the favorite of the king, sparking an overall Parisian preference to his comedies. Whether the comedic preference was to please the king or not, one cannot say, but it certainly kept Molière in business despite his extensive list of those who hated him—particularly the upper class, understandably so. In the next decade, his themes and motifs expanded into ones like fanatical covetousness and older men pursuing younger women, the latter of which is highly thought to be autobiographical (Sumption 3).

It was his comedies that prevailed in the royal court, the most successful of which were written in only the last 10 years of his life, but they continued to enrage the bourgeois public. His early farcical comedies gave way to works like *The School for Wives*, *Tartuffe*, and *The Misanthrope*, which saw the peak of his satirical aptitudes. It was also in these later works that hypocrisy became a major motif, and stock characters gave way to more dynamic characters in order to pinpoint societal flaws, most likely to emphasize that those very foibles can affect anyone regardless of upbringing (Sumption 3). Upon being exposed to the courts for so long, the behavior of those under heavy influence of the king or other socialite constraints were understandably deemed hypocritical by Molière—only saying or doing what they had to, and perhaps going far above and beyond what they had to in order to gain favor with the king, religious or not.

Tartuffe in particular attacks religious hypocrisy as opposed to strictly social hypocrisy as in *Misanthrope*. He may have even personally attacked a specific individual within the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement—who will be discussed later—which resulted in the group's outrage and use of their royal network to ban it. Unfortunately, their connection with the king was stronger than Molière's, and it took five years after the play was written after vigorous censorship and re-writes to finally be performed (Cardullo 174). Nevertheless, his comedies remained popular despite his brazenly pointed commentary. Up until his death just after *The Imaginary Invalid*—yet another satire in which he takes on the health professions—he had the king's support, which allowed Molière a proper burial at the insistence of his wife (Sumption 3).

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORICAL CONTEXT

From its infancy, modern France had been strongly allied to the Catholic Church. By the 16th century, it was on its way—if not there already—to being an equivalent of a world power. It would seem irrelevant to include history more than 100 years prior to Moliere's contemporary time, but perhaps the most important religious action in post-Medieval Europe was the Protestant Reformation, pioneered by Martin Luther in 1517. His 95 Theses, nailed to the door of his German Wittenberg Castle Church, asserted questions and fierce suggestions that he had regarding the corrupt nature of the Catholic Church (Keylor).

Luther was deemed a heretic and was excommunicated from the Catholic Church and largely withdrew from the world. From there, though, his ideas began to spread throughout Europe via radical supporters, sparking a large conversion to Protestantism, which focused on the bible as the sole source of religious authority and that one's salvation depends on faith and not deeds. Much of France took to Protestantism early on, especially the nobility, elite, and intellectual members of society. A faction of the Protestant order that was particularly popular in France was Calvinism, which was established by John Calvin and reaffirmed by the Synod of Dordt in 1619 (Keylor). Calvinism focused a great deal on the idea of predestination, limited atonement, and that man is inherently sinful and ignorant of God and won't know his presence without scripture.

Calvinism and other Protestant sects of Europe became aware of the misuse of their indulgences, which were essentially monetary payments to the church to atone for their sins. Members of the church were vastly wealthy and many seemed to have no interest in the spiritual wellness of their congregation at all. Their hypocrisy had been revealed. In France, the people took advantage of this opportunity to oppose the French Catholic monarchy, which eventually

led to the French Wars on Religion from 1562 to 1589 (Trueman). At this time, Charles IX was king of France, and in order to bring peace he arranged a marriage between his sister and Henry Navarre, who was a leader of the Calvinists during the Wars on Religion. After yet more Catholic vs. Protestant strife even among the ruling family, the Edict of Nantes was signed, which established Roman Catholicism as the national religion, but granted some freedom to the Protestants, including open worship as long as it was outside the city of Paris. Although he was forced to act under the Catholic Counter-Reformation, he promised the Protestants their rights. Unfortunately, he was assassinated by a Roman Catholic extremist by the name of Francois Ravallac (Keylor).

Charles's son and heir was Louis XIII, who had to bear the burden of religious conflict just as much as, if not more than, Charles because of the Thirty Years War. During this time, the Holy Roman Empire would seek to restrict the religious activity of its people, which began another rebellion of the Protestants. Sweden, France, Spain, and Austria all shed blood on mostly German soil, which was split into strict Protestant and Catholic camps. France and Sweden's victories over the Catholic Spaniards ultimately led to the Peace of Westphalia, but at a great cost of lives. The Thirty Years War ended the age of religious wars and also helped to reduce the power of religion on politics, but religious issues still remained politically significant. Louis XIII and his advisor, Cardinal Richelieu died within months of each other, leaving French rule to four-year-old Louis XIV, the Queen Mother Anne of Austria, and the up-and-coming Italian advisor, Mazarin (Trueman).

Due to Louis's parents giving birth to him after 23 years of marriage, therefore making him a "miracle from God," as well as the civil war of Fronde instilled a large ego and a perpetual paranoia of revolt in Louis. At the same time, with policies put in place that were dissolving

power of local coalitions and provinces, the monarchy was being set up for absolutism. Indeed, when Mazarin died, Louis defied tradition and announced his decision to rule without an advisor--to rule with absolute power. He considered himself the first and only liaison of God—which oddly directly contradicts his Catholic upbringing—and became known as the "Sun King," or more rightfully so, the "Son King" (Cardullo 175-176).

As king, Louis centralized government at home and abroad to the colonies, expanded the army, and further snuffed out rebellious nobles. Most horrifically, Louis largely ignored the persecution and suppression of Protestants in France until the Edict of Nantes was eventually revoked in 1685, leading to a mass exodus of French Protestants. In its place stood the Edict of Fontainebleau, which ordered obliteration of Protestant churches, invalidation of Protestant weddings, ejection of their clergy, and closure of their schools—an act of extreme religious zealotry (Sumption 6-7).

Within this extreme specificity of what religious group the people were to follow, heresy became the public enemy number one. This could mean anything from reprimanding benign human passions to condemning any pleasure, instinct, or worldliness. The latter led to groups such as La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, who were formed to execute Catholic principles. They were hired men called "directors of conscience" who performed duties that were actually strictly reserved for the priesthood. One of these men, Charpy de Sainte-Croix, was probably inspiration for the character of Tartuffe because he took advantage of the devotion of his master to seduce his wife (Cardullo 174).

Despite his religious lunacy, the arts flourished under Louis's rule, which is how Molière gained notoriety, and even featured Louis in some of his comedie-ballets. Louis associated himself with many artists, musicians, and intellectuals of the time, and deemed himself the head

of the Académie Française, who standardized the French language and launched several organizations for science, arts, and music. Louis adored the arts and often indulged in sumptuous entertainment at his lavish Palace of Versailles, where he entertained foreign guests with codes of etiquette to show his superiority. This extravagant and excessive lifestyle infuriated the French because it was already drained of resources from the preceding civil wars—this only added to the debt and disapproval of the populous (Sumption 7).

France's proclivity to turbulence, especially of a religious nature, was nothing new by the time the French Revolution took place in 1789. Although the religious strife of the Thirty Years War may not seem directly related to the more political uprisings of the Revolution, both were fighting against an oppressive regime whose rulings were no longer satisfactory to the people. After 150 years or more of turmoil, the time was ripe for a major change, and here it blossoms in the minds of Moliere's contemporaries, who recognize what's wrong in society and who seek to expose that folly with their art. On the horizon is the age of Enlightenment, in which philosophers stew on the rights of man: liberty and equality, which simply couldn't exist in the minds of the Bourbon line of paranoid megalomaniacs.

GLOSSARY

Coquette: A woman who flirts without sincerity to gain the interest and adoration of men

Epee: A three-sided fencing sword

To Bleed (medical): A once-common medical practice in which blood was drawn from the body

Infidel: A person who does not believe in religion, or one who believes in a religion other than one's own

Knavery: Rascally mischief

Sage: A deeply wise person; one who is famed for his or her wisdom

Cato: Roman leader who sought to eliminate the "Hellenization" (spread of "overindulgent" Greek culture) of Rome

Specious: Misleading or deceptive

Mountebanks: A person who deceives other in order to swindle them out of their money

Histrions: Actors

Mummeries: Performances put on by a masked mime

Ariston: Tyrant (king) of Byzantium, ca. 500 BCE

Periandre: Second tyrant (king) of Corinth ca. 600 BCE

Oronte: A character in Moliere's *The Misanthrope*; a suitor to the female lead, Celimene

Alcidamas: Greek sophist and rhetorician, 4th century BCE

Clitandre: Also a character in *The Misanthrope*; same as Oronte.

Censoriousness: Tendencies of harsh criticism

Wangle: To get what is desired by manipulation

Indigence: Extreme poverty

Dunderhead: Archaic slang for a stupid person

Cuckold: A man who is married to a woman who has committed adultery

Scot-free: Going without injury, punishment, or suffering

Deigned: To condescend to do something, especially in the act of giving

Behest: One's bidding or command

Spleen: In reference to one of the four humors; ill-temper and wrath

Addled: Confused; with unclear thought

Machinations: Evil scheming

Scourge: A whip used for punishment

Affectation: Phony behavior and speech used only to impress

Votary: a devoted follower; in religion, it is a person who has made vows to dedicate his or her life to religious service

Seraph: an angelic being of the highest heavenly order

Manna: Spiritual nourishment, especially the Eucharist; the food source supplied to the Israelites in the wilderness in the book of Exodus

Hosanna: An expression of praise

Reticence: Reserve in communication and exchange of information

Lechery: Excessive lust and sexual desire

Libel: A false written statement defaming someone

Jehoshaphat: The fourth king of the kingdom of Judah, ca. 9th century BCE; zealous in suppressing idolatry

Row: A noisy quarrel or uproar

Rivulets: A small stream

Feigned: Pretended

Importunate: Persistent to the point of intrusive

Strong-box: A lockable box, often metal, in which valuables are stored

Pique: A feeling of resentment or irritation caused by a blow to one's pride

Ruses: Acts of deception

Acumen: Ability to make good judgements and decisions

Cozen: Trickery or deception

WORLD OF THE PLAY ANALYSIS

When discussing “the world of the play” of *Tartuffe*, much is to be considered because of the copious number of historical and even somewhat scientific issues—psychologically speaking—that make up such a play. There is, of course, the old cliché that history repeats itself, but literature remains relevant for a reason, and we do see recurring themes and issues throughout time despite a change of scenery. The important questions become, “Why this play here and now?” and “How do we make this classical play translate to our contemporary audience?” By placing Molière’s classic in the 1920s, we hope to establish an understanding of major themes such as hypocrisy as well as an understanding of major societal, economic, artistic, and political atmospheres that were present at both times. Furthermore, the object is to connect those ideas to the present day and answer the question of relevancy.

When beginning the research process to gain ideas about what most obviously connects 17th-century France and 1926 Paris, I consulted Dr. Becky Becker about the concept of the show and what her reasoning was for choosing that particular time period. The excessive nature of the court of Louis XIV and the same such nature of the Jazz Age was the first thing that came to mind. It only makes sense that the people of both eras took on rather flamboyant lifestyles.

One can clearly see the sweeping drama, detail, and opulence in Baroque art and architecture such as Andrea Pozzo’s *Glory of St. Ignatius* or Gian Lorenzo Barberini’s *Baldacchino*. Louis XIV’s own palace of Versailles and its Hall of Mirrors exuded glamour and excess along with the etiquette codes he enforced on those who visited there—all of the above are included in the “Images” section of this casebook. France had been through two religious wars in less than a century by the time Louis XIV ascended the throne, but without an advisor to

keep checks on his power, Louis kept enforcing taxes so that he and his court might afford the lavish lifestyle they were used to (Sumption 7). At the same time, they were always seeking company of artistic visionaries for entertainment and personal ego-boosting. A love of theatrics burgeoned at this time, hence the emotionally-charged and expressive works of the high baroque. Art during this time was created to glorify the king or church in most all European countries, making for lavish, colorful, dynamic, and monumental commissions.

Similarly in the 1920s, there was also a general perception of excess because of rapid economic recovery and increasing national wealth after World War I, greater equality of the sexes, drastic changes in fashion, celebrity cults increasing due to film, technological innovation, and mass production of goods (Young 60). This decreased the price of glass wear, clothing, and jewelry, allowing for more affordable options for those who wanted to share in the indulgences of the day. Tourism of France and its cultural entertainment staples of film, theatre, and music drew flocks of foreign visitors, especially black veterans, who brought jazz along with them (Young 70). A superficial glance registers “glamour” that characterized both times.

However, the wealth was not to be shared by all, as history well documents. Amongst this age of surplus were members of the Lost Generation such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald who were the voices of reason in a world of flagrant overindulgence. They echoed the *Raisonneur* characters of Molière and Voltaire, who were the characters that voiced the sensibilities of the author and were deemed the wisest characters of the works. Cléante serves as Molière’s *Raisonneur* with his sensible and logical speeches that constantly push everyone to think before they act—even in the end, when Tartuffe is being taken off to prison, Cléante must move Orgon to moderate his temper when he has the urge to spurn Tartuffe (Molière 100).

Today, we also live in excess. We aren't even leading the world in population size, yet we use one third of the world's paper, 23 percent of the coal, 27 percent of the aluminum, and 19 percent of the copper. We consume and waste exponentially more than the rest of the world and seem to live like kings (Scheer). That being said, also connecting 1664, 1926, and 2016 are class gaps and wealth disparity. Louis XIV and the upper French society were responsible for the artistic flourishing of the time, but were choking the middle and lower classes with taxes in the process. France in 1926 was paying off war debt, also with taxes. Much like today, the middle and lower-income population received the larger tax burden while the wealthy escaped the tax by finding loopholes in the law (Young 60). Today, jobs have also moved overseas, resulting in massive profits for those in charge. Money keeps pouring into their laps at the same time it disappears from those below them, shrinking the middle class, many of who are up to their eyes in debt. "Average" consumer spending may give the appearance of prosperity, but the reality is that the "1%" account for most of that "average" (Peck).

The most-discussed theme when *Tartuffe* is mentioned is hypocrisy, especially that of a religious nature. Themes of religion have been present in literature for thousands of years, but it wasn't until the Renaissance and afterward that we began to experience its criticism in the mainstream. That being said, *Tartuffe* is by no means attacking religion, but is instead meant to criticize the tendency of some religious leaders to not practice what they preach, as he makes clear in his preface to the final published version of *Tartuffe* (Bold 81). The Protestant Reformation more than a century beforehand sought to amend that same hypocrisy, especially when it came to the lack of actual training of the clergy and the act of indulgences—a literal payment for sins. Sixteenth and Seventeenth-century France took well to Protestantism,

eventually gaining rights under the Edict of Nantes, which was created by Charles IX after the French Religious Wars—perhaps the most hypocritical pairing of words in history.

Louis ascended the throne in 1642 at the age of four. The previous royal advisors, Richelieu and Mazarin had already died by then, and had no successors. Local provincial governments were also steadily losing power, so Louis grew up with the mindset to be an independent and absolute ruler with no power checks or balance (Potter 46). However, this did not mean that the church had no influence on his rule. With the Edict of Nantes instated, Catholicism was the national religion in France, but Protestants could still practice discreetly without persecution. But as Louis's rule progressed, there was a desire to return France to an entirely Catholic nation, as might be expected. Protestant persecution did occur, which was largely ignored by Louis, who eventually revoked the Edict (Cardullo 174). Further, citizens had to be the "right type" of Catholic—certainly a notion implemented by selfish and power-hungry clergy—in order to escape persecution.

Also created during this time was a group by the name of Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, who were a vigilante group of sorts who enforced Catholic law, but were not actually ordained members of the church. It is said that Molière was criticizing a member of this group who seduced a man's wife while staying in their home (Cardullo 174). The Compaigne's court influence outweighed Moliere's favoritism with the king which resulted in the ban of *Tartuffe's* first draft. The remainder of the court—like many others at the time as well as today—mistook the play for condemning religion as a whole.

Louis, oddly enough, quite enjoyed the play and also liked Molière as a person. However, Louis—much like Orgon—could not think for himself and was swept up in the direction of the

false piety of his clerical advisors, who were more than likely condemning it only to seem pious to the king, gaining his favor and increasing their status (Sumption 5). After Molière's exposure to the court for 10 years or so after their first performance for them, it only makes sense that he would be disgusted with the superficial and mannerly lifestyles of the nobility. These "men of God" were not humble enrichers of the spiritual community as they should have been.

Similarly to Molière's day, in the years just after WWI, not much had changed. Religion was still dividing the country, along with politics, economy, and social change. Paralleling most directly with 17th-century religious qualms was the Action Française, a group of French Catholics who honored traditional values, a desire to return to pre-war lack of industry and re-establishment of the monarchy, and a desire to unite France once more under Catholicism. The group was largely anti-Semitic and felt threatened by big businesses and Jewish merchants (Young 57).

The majority of France was fed-up with pre-war society, which made the group fundamentally unpopular, although they were a significant enough movement to call attention to religious conflict. Also luring some of France was the new Communist, Fascist, and/or dictatorial regimes (Young 57). It would seem most contradictory to accept any one of them, considering France's notorious history of megalomania and the vice-like grip of previous leaders. In both 1664 and 1926, we see division between those who seek to truly better the lives of their people as opposed to those who work only for selfish gain while claiming a humble life under God.

Bringing things forward to the present day, the United States has seen a great deal of hypocrisy, even under a seemingly-egalitarian banner. From slavery to the Gilded Age to suffrage to civil rights, we have seen our share of ideals that simply don't add up as well as an

adherence to ideals of the past that are out-of-date and largely oppressive. This election season is certainly no exception. In 1664, 1926, and 2016, there is clearly a desire amongst certain leaders to return to a “better past”: A purely Catholic past without the existence of Protestant influence, a Catholic past with limited civil rights, and a racially and sexually-oppressed past when the only people that were doing well were wealthy Caucasian men, respectively. The past that people like Donald Trump are looking to was indeed a past of abundance and “American Exceptionalism.” However, this was also a time when blacks could not drink out of the same water fountains as whites, society insisted that women remain in the home despite their efforts during WWII, shell-shock was at an all-time high, and a potentially apocalyptic bomb was in development.

This nostalgia, in all three cases, is in vain. The experiences of the previous generations only benefitted those with privilege, not the general population who deserved to live a good and honest life just as much as their neighbors. The hypocritical nature lies in a desire to “Make America Great Again,” but within that, people fashion policies that deny those who are “different” anything but greatness. These same groups often claim to do right under the Lord, but push discriminatory agendas in the name of Christian morality.

At the same time, they exude bigotry and hatred of those who deviate from their strict views of right and wrong. The same people also campaign to oust certain religious groups out of the paranoid idea that they seek to annihilate the free world, when in reality, it is only the most extreme factions of those groups that take on violent action. On a more secular level, they also have taken to the idea that the United States has become Mexico’s trash dump—a place for Mexico to simply have another outlet for crime, drugs, and illegal labor.

Such sentiments undermine the reasons we established ourselves separate from Great Britain in the first place. True, there have been many questions in our past regarding the statement "All men are created equal" and we have made great strides in making that as true a statement as possible. However, when certain people who are looking to become leaders of the country wish to reverse such progress, we are no longer the safe haven that we began as over 300 years ago. Furthermore, pushing those agendas in the name of religion puts one in the same category as a crusader with a convert-or-die mentality. Granted, it may not be that extreme, but the brick-wall rejection and sometimes blatant hatred of those differing from oneself is dangerous ground to tread.

Our production of *Tartuffe*, as Molière intended, is not to judge the religious or their ideas. Religion gives people hope, a sense of duty, a purpose, comfort, a reason for living. There is a reason why Cleante, our Raissonneur, soothes Orgon in Act V, telling him to refrain from his sudden vengeful attitude about "the whole false brotherhood" (Molière 85). What we hope for most is the ability to communicate the importance of a discerning eye, a level head, moderation, and honesty so that we don't immerse ourselves in falsehoods, only to be disappointed and bitter later on. Even if we are duped, another lesson to be learned is to take it in stride and don't lower ourselves to condemning those who did the same to us.

IMAGES

European Baroque



Bernini's Baldacchino, St. Peter's Cathedral
(external view below)



Palace of Versailles, Hall of Mirrors and
exterior





Fontana di Trevi, Rome

Farnese Gallery, Rome



Assumption of the Virgin, Annibale Caracci

Cardsharps, Michelangelo Caravaggio





Caravaggio (left to right, top to bottom):
Calling of Matthew, *Conversion of Paul*,
Bacchus, and *Lute Player*





Il Gesu, Baciccio (Giovanni Battista Gaulli)

Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting,
Artemisia Gentileschi



Susannah and the Elders, Artemisia
Gentileschi





Judith Slaying Holofernes, Artemisia
Gentileschi



Laughing Cavalier, Frans Hals

Las Meninas, Velasquez





Palace of Versailles

Louis XIV, Hyacinthe Rigaud





1920s

The Chrysler Building, New York City



Advertisement



Orange Liqueur advertisement



Life Magazine



Art Deco architecture and light fixture
below



Vogue Magazine



Art Deco metalwork



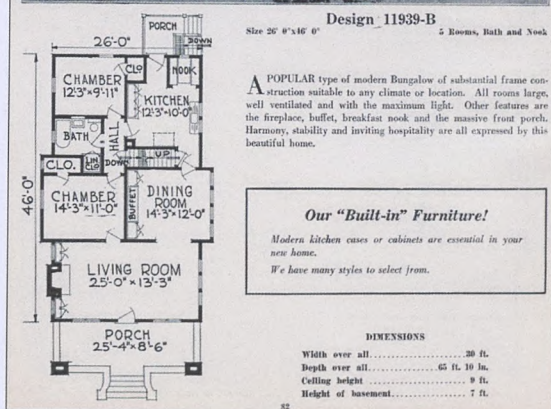
Advertisement for Cyma watch brand



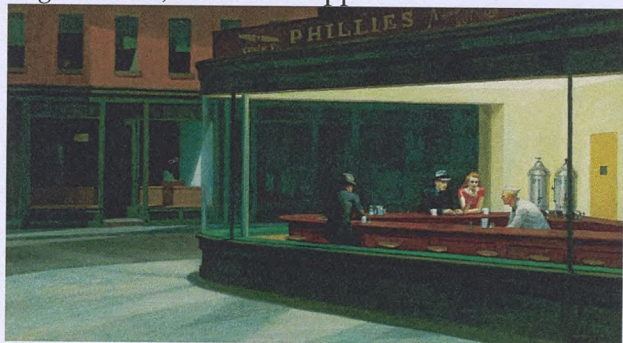
Art Deco elevator



Bungalow-style 1920s residential house



Nighthawks, Edward Hopper



The Elephant Celebes, Max Ernst



Fashion: cloche hats



Art Deco interior





Fashion: swimwear

Three Musicians, Pablo Picasso



Fashion: menswear-inspired



Elisabeth Gabriele, Queen of Belgium



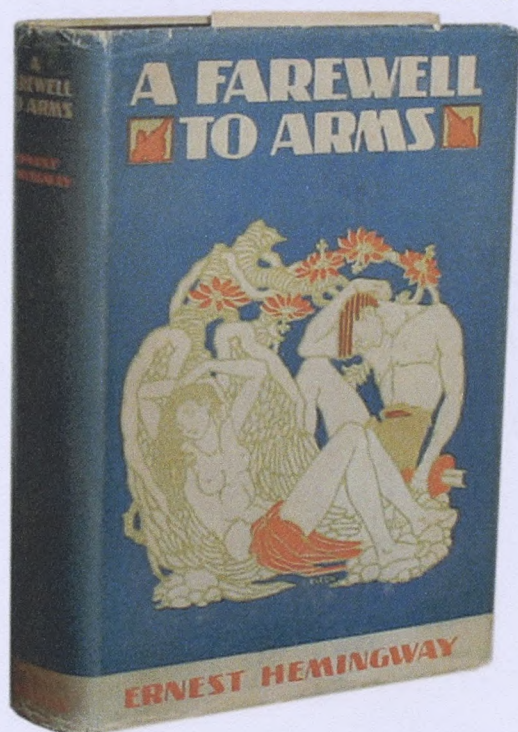
The Bauhaus (famed architecture school),
Walter Gropius



Fashion: boater hats



A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway



The Passion of Joan of Arc—iconic film



Fashion: higher hemlines and the flapper girl





Dance: the Charleston



Bessie Smith, blues singer



Charleston





The Jazz Singer, now controversial for blackface



Bridal fashion



9) Program Notes*

“And there's no evil til the act is known;

It's scandal, Madam, which makes it an offense,

And it's no sin to sin in confidence.” – *Tartuffe* (4.5.19)

Oh, the hypocrisy!

Over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, France was tossed back and forth between Catholic and Protestant doctrine. With Catholicism's influential authority in Paris, Molière walked dangerous ground when the first version of *Tartuffe, ou l'Imposteur* was performed for Louis XIV. How dare this *lowly actor* turned playwright criticize religion and the people of the church? Church leaders were outraged that a character who espoused their beliefs was portrayed as a disdainful hypocrite. But they missed the point entirely. The character's hypocrisy is the very vice that Molière meant to emphasize with *Tartuffe*, yet it was mistaken by the religious advisors of the time as an attack on religion as a whole.

Fast-forward to 1926, the year in which we have chosen to set *Tartuffe*. What is striking is how similar the 1920s are to Molière's time. The Great War (World War I) had just ended, and a new political movement, Action Française, gained momentum. This group—anti-Semitic at its core—sought to reunite France under the monarchy and Catholicism once more. Action Française pushed for a society designed to benefit a select few rather than giving the populous what they had long deserved: egalitarianism. The movement was dying by 1926, but it is fascinating to see how desperately some wanted to return to values of the past.

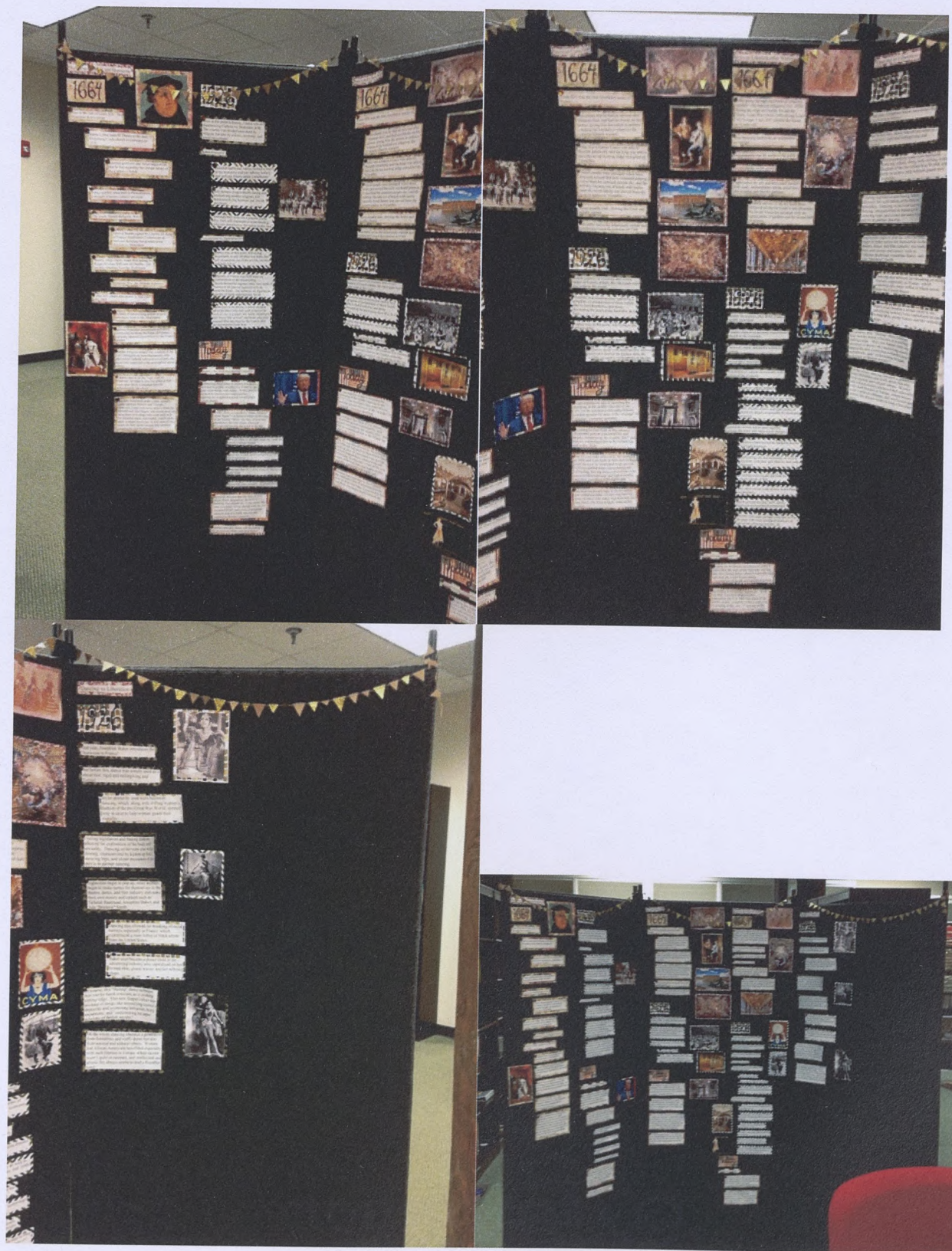
How do these moments in history relate to our world today? The phrase “Make America Great Again” should ring a bell. We are experiencing a similar movement to “bring back” ideals of the past. Perhaps the question is: What is it that makes America great? Arguably it is our

continued progress towards equal treatment of a richly varied populace that makes us great. Yet part of our populace claims to live the Godly life while practicing hatred on an unfathomable level. From campaigning to oust specific religious groups for the sake of “saving us from destruction,” to insisting that the United States is simply a dumping ground for Mexico, those who support such notions follow a detrimental path of hypocrisy. There is a pattern of nostalgic desire for “the good old days” or “better times”—but what is the reality? In 1920s America (and well into the 1960s), blacks weren’t allowed to drink out of the same water fountains as whites, women had far fewer personal rights despite a fierce devotion to working during the war (having only just won the right to vote at the beginning of the decade), veterans of WW II struggled with (the yet-unnamed) PTSD, and the world lived in fear of a bomb destroying our entire existence.

Molière’s *Tartuffe* couldn’t be more relevant. Facades and extremes dominate our society just as much now as they did in 1926 and 1664. It is for us to decide whether we sift through and discern the truth for ourselves or let the “Tartuffes” of the world blind us with false zeal and devotion. If we are to continue to uphold the United States as a land of opportunity and equality, then like *Tartuffe*, it seems we must also practice what we preach.

*Written by Amelia Maxfield and co-dramaturg, Amanda Worthington. Edited by Dr. Becky Becker.

IMAGES OF THE LOBBY DISPLAY PUT IN PLACE FOR THE SHOW DATES



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OH, THE HYPOCRISY!

OR, A DRAMATURGICAL ANALYSIS OF MOLIÈRE'S *TARTUFFE*

An alternative to a thesis submitted to the College of the Arts in partial fulfillment of the
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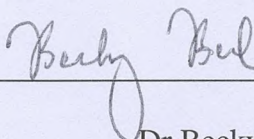
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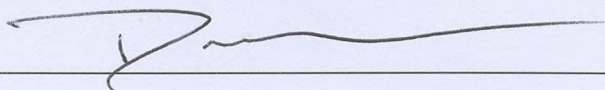
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Amelia Maxfield

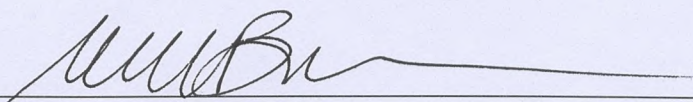
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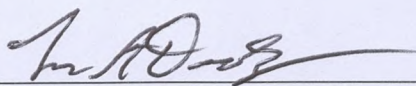
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